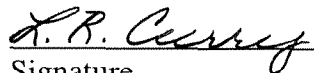# Issue Management Protocol
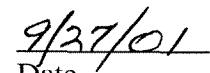
Groundwater/Vadose Zone Integration Project
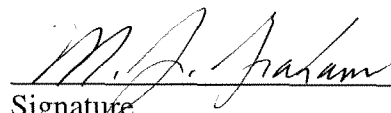September 27, 2001

APPROVAL PAGE

TITLE: Groundwater/Vadose Zone Integration Project Issue Management Protocol

APPROVAL: L. R. Curry, Integration Project Engineer

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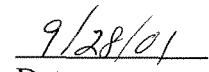Signature   9/27/01
                                                                                       Date

M. J. Graham, Integration Project Manager

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Signature   9/28/01
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1. ISSUE MANAGEMENT PROTOCOL

A controlled and documented Issue Management Protocol is needed to formally track, screen issues for future work scope, and resolve non-technical and technical issues addressed to the Groundwater/Vadose Zone Integration Project (Integration Project) by regulators, stakeholders, Tribal Nations, or the interested public. Implementation of this protocol will meet that need by establishing a process to communicate response to issues in a defensible, traceable and documented manner.

1.1 PURPOSE

The purpose of this protocol is to provide direction for the resolution and documentation of Hanford Site issues submitted through the Integration Project. The objectives are to:

- Define the process whereby issues are identified, evaluated, prioritized, assigned, reviewed, and resolved, deferred, or approved,
- Establish a method to communicate the content, status, and resolution of issues, and
- Identify technical data gaps and needs that should be considered for future work scope to resolve the issue.

1.2   ACRONYMS AND DEFINITIONS

Aggregation   The act of grouping or consolidating related issues to facilitate organization, tracking and resolution.

Bechtel Hanford, Inc.'s Document Information Service (DIS)   The organization responsible for document control within Bechtel Hanford, Inc.

Core Projects   Hanford Site organizations that fund and execute Groundwater/Vadose Zone Integration Project-related activities. These activities are part of the planning, reporting, and change control processes of the Integration Project.

Database Administrator (DA)   The individual (or designee) responsible for administering and maintaining the Issue Management Database.

Groundwater/ Vadose Zone (GW/VZ) Issue Resolution Committee (IRC)	The group of individuals responsible for receiving, reviewing, prioritizing, aggregating, and assigning all issues for resolution or deferral. The committee is also responsible for evaluating and accepting/rejecting proposed resolutions to issues. The Project Engineer for the Integration Project is a permanent IRC member. The remaining members are assigned by the Integration Project Manager from project management staff and from Core Project management. The committee will be comprised of at least three members.
Issue	A concern, non-technical or technical consideration, or potential requirement formally transmitted to the Integration Project.
Integration Project	As used in this protocol, the Groundwater/Vadose Zone Integration Project.
Prioritization	The process of ranking the relative importance of issues to establish a priority for taking further action. The IRC assigns priorities based on programmatic considerations.
Project Representative	The point of contact for issues assigned to a Hanford Site working group by the IRC.
Working Group	A Hanford Site group (e.g., Integration Project or Core Project task group) assigned primary responsibility for resolving an issue.
Resolution	The completion of all actions defined to respond adequately to an issue for which no further work is anticipated.

1.3 ISSUE MANAGEMENT PROCESS

The issue management process consists of several general steps: issue identification, prioritization, and assignment, DRAFT issue resolution, review of the DRAFT resolution, resolution, communicating status, and the identification of data gaps and needs that should be given consideration for future work scope to resolve the issue. A resolved issue may be reopened in the future if new information, data or requirements indicate that the original resolution should be reconsidered. A flow chart with responsible parties (column headings) and the general issue management process is shown in Attachment 1.

1.3.1 Identification

Issues are brought to the Integration Project by completing and submitting an Issue Submission Form (Attachment 2). The form is also located on the Integration Project Internet homepage (http://www.bhi-erc.com/projects/vadose/issues.htm) and may be submitted electronically. Issues will not be addressed until they have been documented on the form and submitted to the Integration Project.

All Issue Submission Forms are routed to the Database Administrator (DA). The DA updates the Issues Database for every issue received and submits the issue to the IRC for evaluation, prioritization, and assignment.

1.3.2 Evaluation and Assignment

The IRC is responsible for prioritizing issues, determining which issues are within the scope of the Integration Project, determining whether issues are technical or non-technical in nature, and assigning them to the appropriate Project Representative for processing and resolution. If an issue is determined to be outside the scope of the Integration Project but within the scope of another Hanford Site organization, the IRC shall take action to identify the appropriate organization capable of resolving the issue and forward the issue appropriately. Issues that fall outside the scope of both, the Integration Project and other existing Hanford Site organizations will be rejected and documented as such within the Issues Database. Any issues that are identified as potential requirements for the Integration Project are managed as described by a flow chart included in the Requirements Management Protocol.

The IRC is responsible for aggregating related issues for resolution. The IRC also establishes criteria to assign a programmatic priority to each issue. The criteria include, but are not limited to:

- The relevance of an issue to the Integration Project mission,
- The importance with respect to operational safety, regulatory compliance or magnitude of any hazard or the consequences of failure,
- Impact on Tri-Party Agreement (TPA) milestones and other contractual commitments,
- The mission or life-cycle stage of a facility or activity that may be impacted by the issue,
- The impact on past and planned assessments and analyses (e.g. dominance), and
- The complexity, uniqueness, and potential schedule or budgetary impacts associated with resolving an issue.

Upon completing their review of the issue, the IRC notifies the DA on the issue status and the DA updates the Issues database accordingly. The IRC then notifies the Working Group/Project Representative responsible for developing a recommendation for resolution of the issue.

1.3.3 Resolution

The Project Representative is responsible for managing the development of draft resolutions for issues that are assigned by the IRC to their Hanford Site Working Group. The Project Representatives' role in resolving issues include:

- Assigning the team to develop DRAFT resolutions,
- Ensuring Working Group review and approval of DRAFT resolutions, and
- Forwarding DRAFT resolutions to the IRC for final review.

Developing a DRAFT resolution to an issue may include taking actions such as:

- Clarifying the issue with the originator,
- Reviewing existing project baselines for ongoing relevant work,
- Reviewing the Hanford Site state of knowledge (including the Features, Events, and Processes Database), and
- Consulting additional sources, such as regulatory and federal requirements and other guidance (e.g., National Environmental Policy Act, Resource Conservation and Recovery Act, Comprehensive Environmental Response and Compensation Liability Act requirements, U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) Orders, and Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development's Nuclear Energy Agency documents).

Once a DRAFT resolution is submitted to the IRC for their review, the Project Representative will notify the DA who will then update the Issues Database accordingly.

Some issues may require a significant amount of time and effort or additional funding to resolve. Under these circumstances, an interim DRAFT response will be developed for these issues explaining the strategy to be used for resolution. This interim response will be submitted to the IRC for their reevaluation to determine the programmatic priority for resolving the issue.

Issues that have merit but cannot be resolved under the current work scope will be considered for pending future work scope, closed out from the issues database, and transferred to the Characterization of Systems - Data Gaps and Needs (DGN) Table. The DGN table will be updated periodically and provides a common platform for the integration of data issues, gaps, and needs that should be considered in the development

and implementation of conceptual models. The DGN table also provides the baseline from which to identify and prioritize future work scope for COS that supports the resolution of key technical data issues.

The process for transferring issues to the Characterization of Systems – Data Gap and Needs table is as follows:

- The issue will be assigned a DGN identification number, documented within the DGN table under the relevant technical area (i.e. Inventory, Vadose Zone), and closed out of the issues database.
- The issue will be closed out of the issues database with the understanding that the need is documented within the Characterization of Systems – Data Gap and Needs table and will be considered for future work scope based on budget and priority constraints.
- The issues database will be updated to document the DGN identification number assigned and the proposed work scope for resolving the issue.

1.3.4 Resolution Review

The IRC's review of a DRAFT issue response results in one of four actions:

- Assigning additional work before acceptance,
- Recommending further review by another party, or
- Recommending Integration Project acceptance of the DRAFT resolution as final
- Transferring the issue to the DGN for consideration with other identified data needs gaps and needs until such time resources may become available (e.g. defer to the fiscal year planning process where the issue and its associated scope can be evaluated against other proposed scope).

The issue will be returned to the assigned Project Representative for rework when the IRC determines that additional work is needed to reach resolution.

If the IRC determines that the proposed resolution requires further review, an appropriate reviewer or review group is identified and the proposed disposition is passed on to the reviewing party. The Project Representative responsible for the issue maintains the responsibility to manage the issue and comment resolution throughout the review process.

Upon completing the disposition of the issue, the IRC will notify the DA who will update the Issues Database accordingly.

1.3.5 Resolution

Issue resolution is complete when a proposed response is judged by the IRC to be adequate and complete, and no further work is anticipated. The IRC will notify the DA who will update the Issues Database accordingly.

Comments on resolved issues, and plans and priorities for resolving issues will be reviewed on an annual basis to assist the projects in planning prior to development of their Detailed Work Plans (DWPs) or equivalent planning documents.

1.3.6 Tracking system

The issue management database is the controlled database used to store, capture and display information regarding Hanford Site issues. The status of issues and the party authorized to change an issue's status are shown in Attachment 3. Queries of the database may be made through the DA, and the DA will generate reports on the status of issues and resolutions. Configuration control will be maintained through formal change control, frequent back-up, strict access, and database updating requirements.

1.4 GW/VZ INTEGRATION PROJECT Internet HOMEPAGE

The Internet homepage for the Integration Project will be the primary publicly accessible, day-to-day communication device on issue status. Issues may be submitted through the homepage using the Issue Submittal Form. Pertinent information extracted from the issue management database will be posted on the homepage to communicate the status of all issues (e.g., received, disposition under development, in review, or resolved). The final resolution of an issue will be posted on the GW/VZ Internet homepage upon acceptance by the IRC.

1.5 RECORDS

BHI DIS will maintain final records of submittal forms, supporting documents, and issue review comments/resolutions as GW/VZ Integration Project files.

1.6 RESPONSIBILITIES

GW/VZ Integration Project Manager
The Project Manager (or designee) oversees the issue resolution process.

GW/VZ Database Administrator (DA)
The DA serves as the point of contact for issues and is responsible for the following:

- Initiating and maintaining the issue tracking process,

- Determining if previous resolutions have already addressed an issue,
- Updating and maintaining the database and Integration Project Web page to indicate date of receipt, description of the issue, progress being made in resolving the issue,
- Providing the issue to the IRC,
- Posting the resolution of the issue at closeout, and
- Submitting a hard copy of final resolutions and supporting documents to DIS.
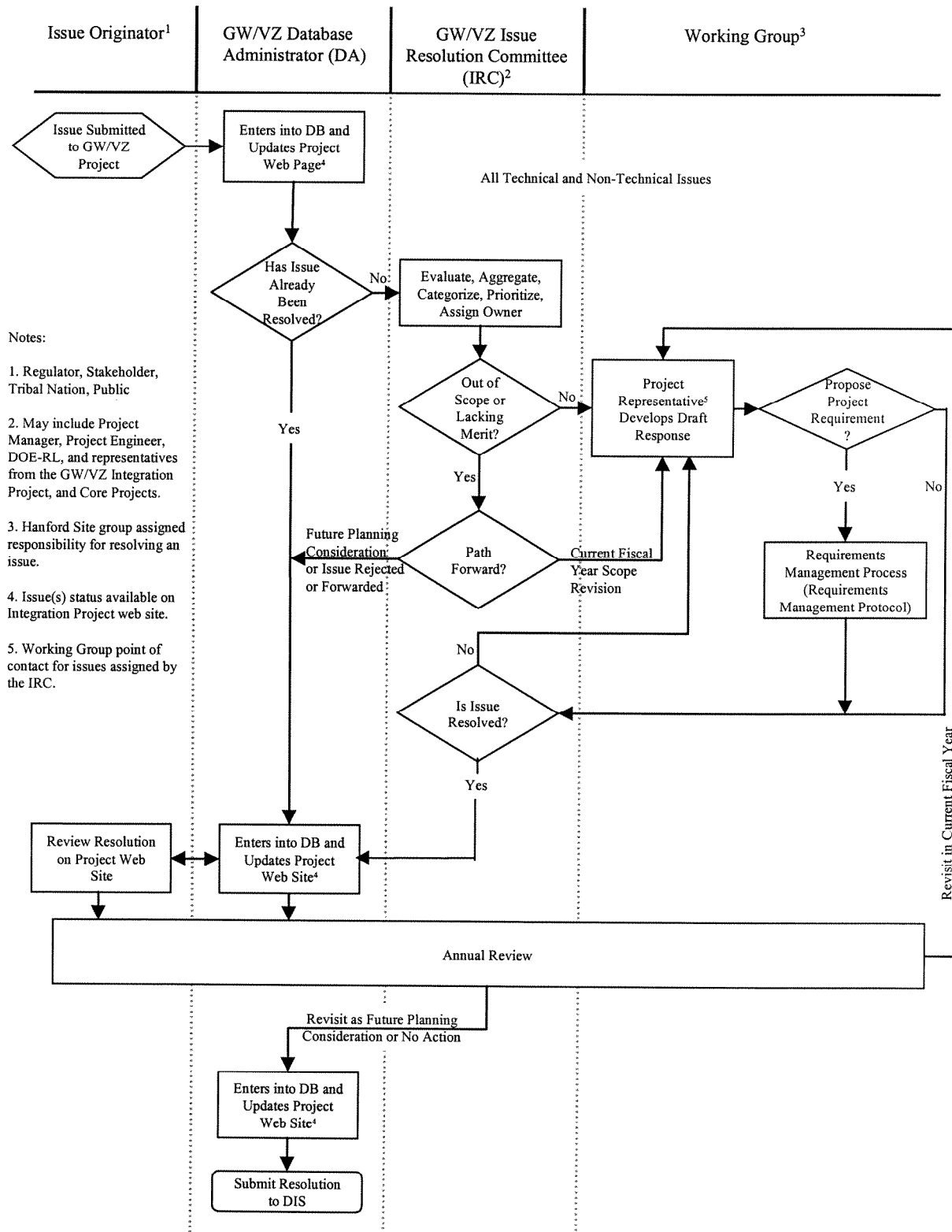
GW/VZ Issue Resolution Committee (IRC)
The responsibilities of the IRC (or designees) are to:

- Evaluate all formally submitted issues,
- Assign programmatic priority to the issue
- Group similar issues,
- Establish priorities for disposition,
- Assign issues to the responsible Project Representative,
- Review and accept/reject DRAFT issue resolutions,
- Recommend acceptance of final resolutions, and
- Reopen and reassign issues only at the direction of DOE.

GW/VZ Working Group

- Reviews the issue with the objective of proposing a reasonable resolution
- May be required to contact the originator of the issue for clarification
- Provides input to the IRC on whether the proposed resolution to the issue is within the scope of their approved fiscal year work scope
- Provides the IRC with the preliminary (proposed) resolution to the issue
- Provides the lead on work scope identification and prioritization for issues pending future work scope
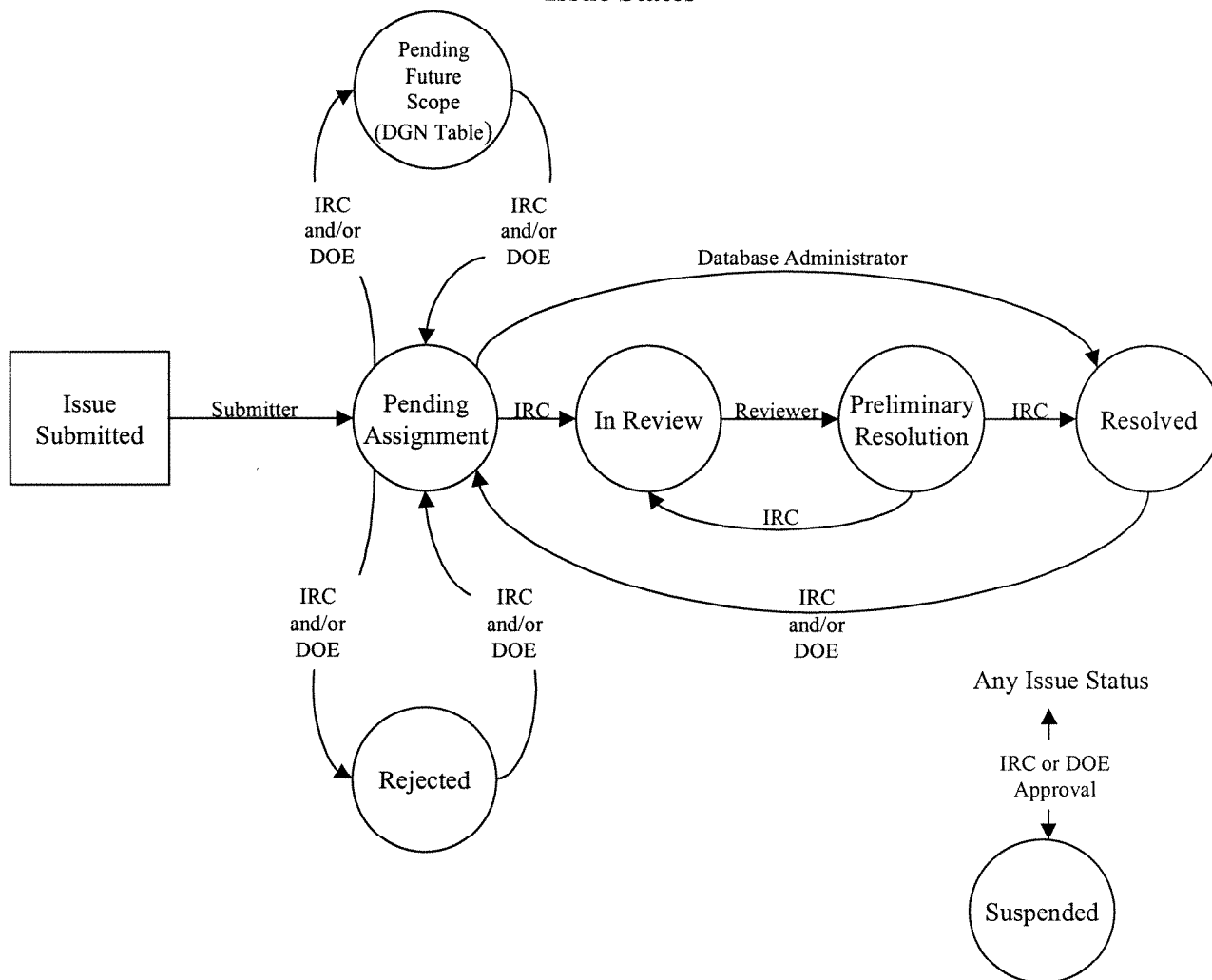
Attachment 1
Issue Management Flowchart

Issue Originator[1]	GW/VZ Database Administrator (DA)	GW/VZ Issue Resolution Committee (IRC)[2]	Working Group[3]

Issue Submitted to GW/VZ Project

Enters into DB and Updates Project Web Page[4]

All Technical and Non-Technical Issues

Has Issue Already Been Resolved?

No → Evaluate, Aggregate, Categorize, Prioritize, Assign Owner

Notes:

1. Regulator, Stakeholder, Tribal Nation, Public

2. May include Project Manager, Project Engineer, DOE-RL, and representatives from the GW/VZ Integration Project, and Core Projects.

3. Hanford Site group assigned responsibility for resolving an issue.

4. Issue(s) status available on Integration Project web site.

5. Working Group point of contact for issues assigned by the IRC.

Yes

Out of Scope or Lacking Merit?

No → Project Representative[5] Develops Draft Response

Propose Project Requirement?

Yes

Yes / No

Future Planning Consideration, or Issue Rejected or Forwarded

Path Forward?

Current Fiscal Year Scope Revision

Requirements Management Process (Requirements Management Protocol)

No

Is Issue Resolved?

Yes

Review Resolution on Project Web Site

Enters into DB and Updates Project Web Site[4]

Revisit in Current Fiscal Year

Annual Review

Revisit as Future Planning Consideration or No Action

Enters into DB and Updates Project Web Site[4]

Submit Resolution to DIS

Attachment 2
Issue Submission Form

GW/VZ INTEGRATION PROJECT
ISSUE SUBMISSION FORM

ISSUE NUMBER:	PROJECT: 22192	DATE:

(to be completed by originator)

NAME OF ORIGINATOR:	DATE SUBMITTED:

ORGANIZATION:

ADDRESS:

PHONE No.:	FAX No.:

E-MAIL ADDRESS:

ISSUE TITLE:

ISSUE (include proposed solution) :

Attachment 3
Issue States

Status Descriptions:

Pending Assignment: An issue is assigned this status when initially received. It keeps this status until the IRC assigns it for resolution, decides it is out-of- scope, to be addressed at a future time, or decides to pass on the issue altogether. Alternately, the DA may determine this issue was resolved previously and assign it a "Resolved" status.

Pending Future Scope: An issue that the IRC has determined to have merit and that is appropriate for the GW/VZ IP to address, but is not within the scope of the current DWP can be assigned this status. Issues holding this status will be considered when the scope to address the issue has been approved by DOE through an appropriate contract mechanism. The IRC may seek concurrence from DOE regarding the questions of scope and appropriateness.

In Review: An issue receives "In Review" status after the IRC has assigned it to a team for resolution, or it is determined that another group (e.g. S&T or Core Project) is already performing work that will resolve the issue. This status is maintained the entire time the team is working to establish a resolution.

Preliminary Resolution: An issue receives this status after the resolution team submits a preliminary resolution for the IRC review and approval. This status is maintained until the IRC either approves or disapproves the preliminary resolution, and obtains project management/engineering concurrence.

Resolved: An issue is assigned the "Resolved" status after the IRC accepts the resolution and receives concurrence from project management/engineering.

Rejected: An issue that the IRC has determined to not be within the scope of the GW/VZ IP, that is not appropriate for the project to address, or that is without merit may be assigned this status. An issue assigned this status will not be addressed further, unless either the IRC or DOE later chooses to address it.

Suspended: An issue at any time, regardless of its current status, may be assigned this state if the IRC, with the concurrence of DOE, determine that work to either resolve or implement the issue should be suspended for any reason.

DISTRIBUTION

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